The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1.   A guidewire exit tool, comprising:

a handle; and

a pin secured to the handle and having a diameter that fits within a guidewire channel of a rapid exchange-type catheter, wherein the pin engages a guidewire and lifts an end of the guidewire out of a guidewire channel.

2.   The guidewire exit tool of Claim 1, wherein the pin has a tapered end that engages a guidewire.

3.   The guidewire exit tool of Claim 1, wherein the pin is secured to the handle with a web, the web having a thickness that is less than the diameter of the pin.

4.   The guidewire exit tool of Claim 1, wherein the handle is oval in shape.

5.   The guidewire exit tool of Claim 4, wherein the oval handle has an axis that is angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the pin.

6.   The guidewire exit tool of Claim 4, wherein the handle has a recessed center and a raised annular rim.

7.   The guidewire tool of Claim 6, wherein the handle has opposing recesses on each side of the handle.

8.   A method of using a guidewire with a rapid exchange-type catheter, comprising:

loading a guidewire into a guidewire channel of a rapid exchange-type catheter;

engaging a proximal end of the guidewire with a guidewire exit tool to lift a proximal end of the guidewire out of the guidewire channel, the guidewire exit tool including:

a handle; and

a pin secured to the handle, wherein the pin is insertable into the guidewire channel to engage the proximal end of a guidewire and lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel.

9.   The method of Claim 8, wherein the pin has a tapered end that engages the guidewire.

10.   The method of Claim 7, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire exit tool in the guidewire channel.

11.   The method of Claim 7, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire against the guidewire exit tool.